

Implementing Rigour and Responsiveness

BIS / DfE brief on progress for FE Governors and Leaders

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English and Maths Condition / New GCSEs

We have announced that from August 2015, we will amend the funding condition, so that full-time 16 to 19 students with prior attainment of grade D in English and/or maths will take GCSE, rather than any other qualification in these subjects.

Reformed GCSEs in English and maths will be available for first teaching in schools from September 2015 with the first examinations being sat in summer 2017. These new GCSEs will both be more stretching at the top, and provide greater assurance of literacy and numeracy than existing GCSEs. These new GCSEs will then be introduced into post-16 education in phases between 2015 and 2020. The new GCSEs will become the standard qualifications in English and maths at Level 2 for full time 16-19 students from September 2017 and we will revise the condition of funding further to support this. The final requirements will be set nearer the time, informed by the outcomes of Ofqual's consultation on grading thresholds for the reformed GCSEs.

Outcome based success measures

We have made clear that at both 16-19 and in adult provision more focus will be placed on learner outcomes, as well as achievement of qualifications. Last autumn we consulted on an accountability regime for 16-19 provision and our response to that consultation was published in the spring. Latest destination data for 16-19 provision was published in June and is available [here](#).

For adult provision we are also developing a new set of outcome focused measures of performance. These measures utilise matched administrative data which is already collected across government - from BIS, DfE, HMRC and DWP. The measures will focus on three areas: progression within learning; destinations (into further learning and employment); and earnings. We will publish the first set of experimental data on these measures later in July, showing results for 2010/11 learners. We then intend to publish data for 2011/12 learners in November 2014. Alongside the July publication we will be consulting on how these measures will be used both to inform choice and in formal accountability.

Intervention in further education: The Strengthened Intervention Process

The strengthened intervention process as described in *Rigour and Responsiveness in Skills*, has been operating since August 2013.

In May 2014, we published '*Intervention in Further Education: The Strengthened Intervention Process*', which details how the process ensures rapid and robust action is taken to address underperformance in FE Corporations, designated institutions and local authority maintained FE institutions.

At the heart of the strengthened intervention process is the role of the FE Commissioner and FE Advisers. '*The Strengthened Intervention Process*' document sets out: the role and purpose of the FE Commissioner and FE Advisers; how the intervention process is operating in practice; and how we will communicate when and where the FE Commissioner will be intervening. A copy of the *Intervention in Further Education: The Strengthened Intervention Process*' can be seen at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-commissioner-intervention-process>

FE Commissioner summary assessments

To enable governing bodies and senior executives in all FE providers to learn lessons from the FE Commissioner's experiences, we have published the FE Commissioner's Summary Assessments which detail his findings and conclusions.

The first eight summaries were published on 18 June 2014 along with a letter to the individual colleges, charging them to produce an action plan to address the necessary improvements. These summaries are available to download at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-commissioner-intervention-summary-assessments>

BIS will be publishing summaries, of all future FE Commissioner assessments, once the college or institution subject to intervention has responded to the recommendations.

Apprenticeships

Trailblazers are leading the way in implementing the new Apprenticeships. They are made up of both large and small employers and are designing the first Apprenticeship standards and assessment approaches. Lessons learned will be used for future implementation. The first of these are in the sectors of Aerospace, Automotive, Digital Industries, Electrotechnical, Energy and Utilities, Financial Services, Food and Drink Manufacturing and Life Sciences and Industrial Sciences.

The standards produced by the first Trailblazers were published on 4 Mar 2014 (www.apprenticeships.org.uk/standards). A second phase of Trailblazers was announced in March and a third is due to be announced in September. A full list of sectors and employers involved can be viewed in our [Trailblazer Guidance](#). We expect the first new Apprenticeships will begin to be delivered during 2014/15. We will continue to learn lessons from the Trailblazers and all new Apprenticeship starts from 2017/18 will be on new employer-led standards.

Through our Funding Reforms, we will put Apprenticeship funding in the hands of employers so that they can choose the most effective training for their apprentices.

We are trialling a simple funding approach for new employer-led Apprenticeship standards in 2014/15.

- For every £1 that an employer invests in training an apprentice, the Government will pay £2 up to a clear cap.
- Extra funding will be provided to support small businesses with fewer than 50 staff, for apprentices aged 16-18 and for successful completion.
- English and maths (Level 1 & 2) will also be fully funded.

We recently consulted on the mechanism for routing funding to employers. The responses are being evaluated and we will publish a response in the autumn.

Traineeships

7,400 young people started Traineeship programmes in the first nine months and commitments from a host of major national employers such as BT, Barclays, Virgin Media and the BBC.

We published a revised 2014/15 Framework on 16 May 2014, which sets out how the programme will be delivered from August 2014 and is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-young-people-to-develop-the-skills-for-apprenticeships-and-sustainable-employment-framework-for-delivery>.

The Framework makes a number of refinements to the Traineeships policy and gives employers and providers greater flexibility to design programmes for eligible young people. Key changes include the removal of the 16-hour rule so that young people on

Jobseekers Allowance can undertake the training elements that form part of their Traineeship; and the extension of funding eligibility to include 24-year olds, making Traineeships available to young people aged 16-24 inclusive.

On 19 June, we published a consultation document that sets out a broad range of proposals for how the Government will fund Traineeships in the future; with a focus on encouraging the best results for young people; and achieving a more consistent experience for 16 to 24 year olds on the programme.

The consultation is now open and we are seeking the views of providers. The results will be announced in autumn 2014. The changes would take effect at the beginning of the 2015/16 academic year. The consultation is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/traineeships-funding-reform-in-england>.

Advanced Learning Loans

The Government published a consultation 'Further Education – Future Development of Loans' on 19 June 2014, seeking views on the future of the 24+ Advanced Learning Loans system. The consultation, which closes on 21 August, includes a proposal to expand the scope of loans in the FE sector, to include 19-23 year olds and to make loans available for Level 2 qualifications where learners are not currently entitled to full grant funding. This is a proposal that could have significant implications for all colleges.

In addition to that proposal, the consultation explores ideas which may help to simplify the loans funding framework, and to create greater coherence between the FE and HE loans systems. These broader issues include:

- Considering whether the administrative rules of the Advanced Learning Loans system could be simplified;
- Consulting on the idea of moving certain qualifications, for example Higher National Diplomas and Higher National Certificates from Higher Education funding to Advanced Learning Loans, and seeking feedback on what equivalent higher-level qualifications should also attract loan funding; and
- Seeking feedback on the effectiveness of the 24+ Advance Learning Loans system, and on the appropriateness of the information, advice and guidance about these loans.

You can access the consultation document and respond by using this web address: <https://bisgovuk.citizenspace.com/digital/future-development-of-loans-in-further-education>

LEPs and Skills Capital

We recognise FE colleges are developing strong and effective working relationships with LEPs, supporting the development of strategies to drive growth in the areas they serve. The recent Growth deals announcement includes the allocation of £665m of Local Growth Fund skills capital to LEPs across 2015-16 and 2016-17. Skills capital proposals within the Strategic Economic Plans have demonstrated good partnerships between LEPs, providers and businesses, with a range of innovation and collaboration. FE colleges should build on the good partnerships now developed to revisit their plans and strategies with a view to further strengthening their engagement with other skills partners, businesses and LEPs to achieve synergy in the drive for growth.

Workforce strategy

On 2 July we published the FE Workforce Strategy which underlines our commitment to continuing to support the sector to strive for excellence in the quality and professionalism of teachers and trainers. It reinforces the importance of joining up our work across government to support and develop teachers and leaders to be the best, to encourage businesses to engage with the sector to align plans with need at a local level and to ensure that the best use is made of technology across the sector.

We also confirmed arrangements for the Golden Hello scheme, which will encourage new graduate maths teachers to join the sector. This is one of the packages that represent a total commitment of £30m over the next two years to help the sector to meet its commitments to deliver the best English, maths and SEN teaching that it can. We encourage you to make the best use of all of the support that is available to you at this time – bursaries and subject knowledge enhancement for new trainee teachers and enhancement courses for current teachers.

We know that the strategy and the associated incentives are not the end of the process however; we are committed to working with you to continue to develop the right support to achieve our shared goals and want to continue to develop a dialogue with you about what we might do next.

Further details on the workforce strategy and golden hellos can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-workforce-strategy>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mathematics-teachers-golden-hello-scheme>

National Leaders of Governance

19 National Leaders of Governance (NLG) have now been appointed to support FE and sixth-form colleges on governance issues. NLGs are experts in governance from within the FE sector and other sectors.

The Education and Training Foundation will fund **one day's NLG consultancy** for each FE college participating in the NLG scheme. FE colleges can engage NLGs through AoC for additional consultancy days, for which a daily fee will be payable.

Further information can be found here: <http://www.aoc.co.uk/funding-and-corporate-services/governance/support-governance/national-leaders-fe-governance>

18- 21 Work Skills Pilot 1: English and maths

In December, we will launch a pilot to test the impact on skills and employment outcomes of mandating new 18-21 year old Jobseeker's Allowance claimants with English and maths below Level 2 to English and maths training for up to 16 hours per week, alongside their jobsearch.

The training offered will either be blended with some face-to-face tutor support or purely online with virtual tutor support, and is expected to be delivered by consortia of Agency-registered providers and learning technology companies.

This pilot will give 10,000 young jobseekers in Kent, Mercia, Devon, Cornwall and Somerset an opportunity to engage with learning in a different way and to work towards either a Functional Skills or GCSE qualification. We want to change how learning feels for these young people and give them a real sense of owning their learning journey.

The pilot is an opportunity for young people to increase their skills and improve their educational and employment outcomes and the evaluation, which will be a Randomised Controlled Trial, will collect information on claimants' attitudes towards the learning as well as their employment outcomes and skills acquisition.

The Invitation to Tender closed on 14 July and the Skills Funding Agency will award contracts around September.

National Colleges

In January we announced plans to create a number of new National Colleges to tackle high level skills gaps in certain key sectors. The High Speed Rail College is the first specialist National College to be developed and plans are in place to create more in the coming years. In order to make this a reality, a [call for engagement](#) was launched in June which encourages employers in key sectors who believe that there is demand for a National College in their industry to approach us with their ideas.

National Colleges by their very nature will be limited in number. They will only emerge where there is real employer demand and commitment to their development, and where there is a strategic need for intervention at a national level. They will have a national status and role, taking a longer term strategic view of skill needs in their sector, focusing on specialist higher level skills training (Levels 3, 4 and 5) in industries critical to the economy, and will operate alongside schools, colleges and other providers of FE to provide strong progression routes right through from entry-level to postgraduate provision. Alignment with the industrial strategy is therefore likely to be an important factor in most cases, and all will have the active participation of existing and prospective employers in the industries concerned.

Vocational Qualifications

Qualifications have seen significant reform at both 16-19 and for adults. The updated lists of approved Tech Levels and Applied General Qualifications which, along with A Levels, will be the only Level 3 qualifications recognised within school and college 16-19 performance tables in 2016, were published in spring 2014. The lists of approved qualifications for courses beginning in September 2014 are available [here](#). A new 16-19 performance tables measure, known as the TechBacc, will be introduced at the same time to recognise the highest achievements of students undertaking technical education. Further details are available [here](#).

On 18 June, the minister announced seven TechBacc trailblazers; schools and colleges that will be working with local employers to develop programmes based on the three elements of the TechBacc measure, a Tech Level, Level 3 maths and extended project qualifications. A new category of qualifications, Substantial Vocational Qualifications at Level 2, was also announced which will be recognised in school and college performance tables from September 2017. These are entry-level, high-quality qualifications which enable students to enter a specific trade or occupation or progress to study a Tech Level. The first approved list will be published in autumn 2014 for teaching from September 2015. Further information is available [here](#).

Following the publication in March of *Getting the Job Done*, the Government's reform plan for vocational qualifications, Ofqual will review the working of the Qualifications and Credit Framework and Government will be looking at whether small pieces of learning (for example on college induction) should continue to be packaged as qualifications.

Technology: FELTAG Response

The Government's response to the FELTAG report can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-learning-technology-action-group-feltag-recommendations-government-response>

The response sets out what action Government is taking to help FE make the best use of technology. But this is not something simply for Government to impose “top down”. We will only get the most out of technology if we all continue to work together to help teachers use the technology. That way they can concentrate on where they can add the most value for the benefit of learners. We hope therefore FECs will engage as the FELTAG recommendations start to be implemented.

FELTAG looked specifically at FE. We want to ensure education at all levels can get maximum benefit from technology and the ETAG group is addressing this – but taking a different, more future-looking slant than FELTAG. Input from FE is very important and you are encouraged to do so through their website:

<http://feltag.org.uk/etag/>

SEND reforms

Changes to the arrangements for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) will be implemented from 1 September this year. These are really exciting changes – a genuinely 0-25 system which supports young people with SEND during their transition to adulthood. Colleges have a vital role to play, including being part of the new assessment and [Education, Health and Care \(EHC\)](#) planning process (EHC plans replace Learning Difficult Assessments), and contributing to local offers, published by local authorities and including details of post-16 education and training for young people with SEN and disabilities.

There are some key things you should be doing now to prepare for 1st September, including communicating with parents and young people about the reforms, so they understand the changes and how a phased and orderly transition will happen locally (you can use this [open letter](#) to parents from Minister Edward Timpson); and identifying an overall lead to oversee implementation of the reforms in your college. More information can be found in the DfE's [non-statutory guide for the FE sector](#), as well as on [gov.uk](#).

Skills Funding Agency Chief Executive Recruitment

The recruitment process is currently underway to appoint a new permanent Chief Executive to the Skills Funding Agency with the aim of being in post by the autumn 2014

Free meals for disadvantaged students in FE

FE funded institutions must provide free meals to their 16 to 18 year old students (or 19 to 25 year olds if they are subject to an LDA or EHCP) who, or whose parents, are in receipt of one of the listed welfare benefits. Full details of this policy have now been set out in [guidance](#) published on 16 April.

Students can be provided with a meal, or a voucher or credit to exchange for a meal on-site or off-site. In exceptional circumstances, institutions can provide cash to eligible students. Full details are set out in the guidance.

Institutions were informed of their funding allocations on 12 May. Allocations were based on a rate equivalent to £2.41 per student per meal, and included a one-off payment towards set-up costs of 5% of the allocation, with a minimum payment of £1,000 and a maximum of £6,000. We will monitor actual numbers of eligible students as declared by institutions on their autumn data return and use a contingency fund to make in-year adjustments to funding, subject to affordability.

Perkins Review of Engineering Skills

We have been busy working with the engineering community to implement the recommendations from Professor Perkins Review of Engineering Skills which was published in November. The engineering community have established four task and finish groups to focus on the recommendations relating to inspiration (Experiencing Industry in Schools), FE (Cutting Edge Skills in FE), HE (Employer Engagement in HE) and postgraduate skills (Specialist Skills).

Furthermore, in direct response to the recommendations from Professor Perkins' Review of Engineering Skills in November, the Secretary of State announced a £30 million investment to help engineering companies establish training programmes to develop future engineers in areas of acute shortage. This forms part of Government's Employer Ownership Fund to enable employers to address skills shortages holding back their business by providing a 50 per cent funding match. £10 million of the fund will be directed to a call specifically for '*Developing Women Engineers*' and £10 million to a call for '*Improving Engineering Careers*'. These calls opened at the end of June and will remain open for 24 weeks.

Application forms and guidance are available from the Government publications website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/employer-ownership-improving-engineering-careers.

The remaining £10 million will be made available in the autumn to develop engineering skills in smaller companies.

Honours

The Queen's Birthday Honours saw recognition for several individuals involved in college governance. Neil McLean, former Governor at Leeds City College, was awarded a CBE; Roger Morris, Chair of Governors at Northampton College and Chair of the Association of Colleges Governors' Council received an OBE; and Jacqueline Buffton, Vice Chair of Governors at City of Bath College, received an MBE.

There were many other honours for individuals across the FE sector, which are testimony to achievements across the sector. Honours are an effective way of recognising personal and collective achievement and to raising the profile of FE. For further information on how to nominate an individual, FE colleges can contact the BIS Honours team at alison.marsh@bis.gsi.gov.uk and Sixth Form Colleges can contact the Department for Education team at honours.team@education.gsi.gov.uk

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Department for Education

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